



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Vayeshev

December 8, 2017

A Taste of Torah

Well-Balanced

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

The word Torah means “teaching.” Appropriately, we are always being taught lessons from each and every part of the Torah. The lessons of the Torah are ones we could, and should, apply to our daily lives.

In this week’s parsha, the story of Yosef being sold into slavery by his very own brothers provides a unique challenge for us. How can we draw practical life lessons from a story of which we understand so little? Fortunately, we aren’t left to decipher these topics on our own; we are blessed to have many commentaries throughout the ages to help us understand the lessons.

The Malbim (Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser; 1809-1879), whose commentary covers the entire written Torah, provides a very insightful explanation, one which gives us direction in all of our human interactions. To better understand the Malbim’s comments, let’s take a closer look at the opening words of this story. The Torah relates that Yosef was friendly with the sons of Bilha and Zilpa (Rochel and Leah’s maidservants respectively and his father’s secondary wives). Rashi explains that the sons of Bilha and Zilpa were referred to as “children of the maidservants” by the children of Leah. Yosef therefore made it a point to befriend them. The Torah states that Yosef brought reports to his father regarding the negative conduct of the sons of Leah.

The Malbim explains that the sons of Leah saw an inconsistency in Yosef’s behavior. On the one hand, he was willing to humble himself before those who were below him, the children of the maidservants. On the other hand, he was bold with his “real” brothers, going so far as to rebuke them and report back to his father Yaakov on

what he saw as negative behavior by his brothers. The sons of Leah believed that Yosef’s attitude toward them came from an arrogant and evil character. They assumed that he behaved with great benevolence toward the children of Bilha and Zilpa because they provided no challenge to his feelings of superiority.

The true motive behind Yosef’s actions was exactly opposite of what the brothers believed. It was Yosef’s great humility that moved him to treat the sons of Bilha and Zilpa with kindness. In this same vein, Yosef moved out of his comfort zone to confront the sons of Leah for what he perceived as inappropriate behavior. What Yosef displayed was the ability to manage the different aspects of his personality perfectly, applying the appropriate trait to fit the needs of each and every interaction. The Malbim goes on to explain that there are many different opposing character traits. For example: humility-arrogance, generosity-frugality, compassion-cruelty. The key to living the life of a *tzaddik* is to be humble toward the righteous and, at the same time, have the courage to confront wrongdoing with confidence. One cannot afford to be humble all the time simply because that is one’s disposition, as this will prevent a person from being assertive when the situation calls for a strong response. What Yosef’s brothers perceived as an inconsistency was, in fact, a testament to his proactivity. He didn’t merely react to each situation, but chose the proper response.

As humans, we are endowed with the ability to make choices. The first step is to recognize that it is in our hands to choose our response, even when we didn’t create the circumstances.

Stories for the Soul

Photo Opportunity

Based on a story on revach.net

Reb Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, the Kopischnitzer Rebbe (1888-1967) travelled to the Land of Israel to attend the wedding of his granddaughter to the son of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1910-1995). Upon arriving in the Holy Land, he met Rabbi Auerbach for the first time, and the two great Torah leaders developed a warm connection.

Following the wedding, prior to returning to America, the rebbe went to bid farewell to Rabbi Auerbach. After the visit, the two men walked outside of Rabbi Auerbach’s home to await Rabbi Heschel’s ride to the airport. The car did not immediately arrive, and Rabbi Auerbach sent someone to bring a chair for his distinguished guest. The chair arrived, but the rebbe refused to sit, despite his host’s insistence.

Rabbi Heschel explained his refusal. “When I was young, I once heard a wonderful principal from my father, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir of Kopischnitz: ‘Before you take any action, imagine that a photographer is standing opposite you, photographing your every move. Take out the pictures and examine them. If you’re satisfied with your appearance, carry out what you intended. If not - refrain!’ “I followed my father’s advice and imagined the whole scenario, and I said to myself ‘How will I be able to look at a picture of myself sitting, with Rav Shlomo Zalman standing next to me!’

Our Sages tell us that while Reuven
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Kollel Happenings

RABBI REISMAN WEEKLY IN DENVER

Join thousands around the globe in listening to the renowned weekly Navi shiur of Rabbi Yaakov Reisman! Rabbi Reisman's weekly Motzoei Shabbos class is shown at Beth Jacob High School, 5100 W. 14th Ave., this week at 7:30 pm. For sponsorships and info, contact info@denverkollel.org.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights at Aish Denver (lounge area), 8:15-9 pm, for men and women.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Division of the Denver Community Kollel is dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch & Learn class on the weekly parsha at EDOS, 198 S. Holly St., at 12:00 pm. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Most Shabbos mornings, the *maftir* (final *aliyah* in the Torah) repeats verses which have been read immediately prior to his *aliyah*. When else do we repeat the same verse(s) twice or thrice during one Torah reading?

A: 1) During the Torah reading on Rosh Chodesh, with the exception of Rosh Chodesh Teves and Rosh Hashana, a verse read for the Kohen is repeated for the Levi. Alternately, according to the custom of the Vilna Gaon and many Ashkenazic communities in Eretz Yisroel, the final three verses of the Levi's *aliyah* are repeated for the *shelishi* (third *aliyah*). 2) On Chol Hamoed Sukkos in the Diaspora, the *revi'i* (fourth *aliyah*) repeats what has been read for the Kohen and Levi, with the exception of Hoshana Rabba, when the *revi'i* repeats what has been read for the Levi and *shelishi*. According to the custom of the Sephardim and Vilna Gaon, the *shelishi* repeats what has been read for the Levi and *revi'i* repeats what has been read for the Kohen and Levi.

3) On weekdays of Chanukah, with the exception of Rosh Chodesh and the first and last days, according to the custom of the Sephardim and Vilna Gaon, the *shelishi* repeats what has been read for the Kohen and Levi. According to Rema, the *shelishi* reads additional verses which haven't been read yet. 4) On Purim morning, the Sephardic custom is to repeat the final verse of the reading. There is generally a minimum requirement to read at least ten verses at a Torah reading. The reading of Purim, however, contains only nine. Tosafos (Megilla 21b) explains that since we complete the topic, we need not read more verses from the next, unrelated, chapter. The Sephardic communities, while in agreement with the above reasoning, have the custom nevertheless to repeat the final verse, bringing the total verse count to ten. Sources: Orach Chaim 423:2, 663:1 and 684:1.

This week's question: When does one repeat the same verses four times in one Torah reading?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Alshich, the Alshich Hakadosh - Part II

Moshe Alshich was born in Adrianople, Turkey in 1508 to Chaim Alshich. In his youth, he studied under Rabbi Yosef Caro in Adrianople and under Rabbi Yosef Taitatzak in Salonica.

Rabbi Moshe was very close with Rabbi Caro, and even referred to him as "my father." Sometime relatively early in his life, he moved to Tzfas, around the same time as Rabbi Caro. He was ordained by Rabbi Caro and eventually served on

Rabbi Caro's *bais din* (Jewish court of law) in Tzefas.

Rabbi Moshe became a teacher of Torah in Tzefas. Among his disciples were Rabbi Chaim Vital, who was also the chief disciple and transcriber of the great kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, known as the Arizal. Another famous disciple was Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon, known as the Mahari Tatz.

Stories for the Soul

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made an attempt to save Yosef by convincing his brothers to throw him in a pit, intending to return later and rescue him, had he realized that the Torah would state that "Reuven heard

and he saved him from their hands," he would have carried Yosef home to Yaakov. It is imperative that we remember that whatever we do is being recorded for all time.

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